

## Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CEQ-01 AID-05 CIAE-00 SOE-02  
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 EPA-01 INR-07 IO-13 L-03  
NSF-01 NSC-05 NSAE-00 PM-05 USIA-06 SS-15 SP-02  
DOE-11 INT-05 AGRE-00 SSM-03 /111 W  
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P 311546Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4950

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E. O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: SENV  
SUBJ: DATA FOR THE YEAR 2000 STUDY

REF: STATE 2024

1. REGRET RESPONSE TO REFTEL WAS INADVERTENTLY DELAYED.  
HOPE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WILL STILL BE OF USE.

2. PRINCIPAL (AND VIRTUALLY ONLY) PUBLISHED DATA  
SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS RAISED REFTEL IS 1975 USAID/USDA  
STUDY "EGYPT: MAJOR CONSTRAINTS TO AGRICULTURAL  
PRODUCTIVITY." LITTLE NEW INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE.  
WHILE GOE MINAG HAS SEVERAL TECHNICAL PEOPLE FAMILIAR  
WITH DATA COLLECTION, MINISTRY LACKS FULL RESOURCES  
FOR COMPILATION, INTEGRATION AND ANALYSIS OF SUCH  
INFORMATION.

3. EMBASSY NEVERTHELESS SUBMITS FOLLOWING GENERAL  
RESPONSES TO APPLICABLE QUESTIONS RAISED REFTEL:  
SALINITY AND WATERLOGGING HAVE BECOME UNEXPECTEDLY  
URGENT PROBLEMS IN PAST FEW YEARS DUE FARMERS' TRADITIONAL  
OVERUSE OF AVAILABLE WATER SUPPLY WHICH WAS INCREASED  
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WITH COMPLETION OF ASWAN HIGH DAM AND SUBSEQUENT INTRO-  
DUCTION OF WIDESPREAD IRRIGATION. TRADITIONAL METHODS  
OF SEASONAL SOAKING/FLOODING CROPS CONTRIBUTED TO SUDDEN,  
UNANTICIPATED INCREASE IN INCIDENCE OF THESE PROBLEMS  
DUE TO RISE IN WATER TABLES. GOE MIN AG ESTIMATES THAT  
50,000 TO 60,000 ACRES (ROUGHLY ONE PERCENT OF CULTIVABLE  
LAND AREA) HAVE BEEN LOST TO PRODUCTION DUE TO THESE

COMPLICATIONS OVER LAST FIVE-YEAR PERIOD. GOE WITH DONOR ASSISTANCE, HOWEVER, IS TAKING SERIES OF STEPS TO RECTIFY PROBLEM THROUGH INSTALLATION OF TILE DRAINAGE SYSTEM IN DELTA AND OTHER IRRIGATED AREAS. EXTENSIVE PROJECTS, PRINCIPALLY FINANCED BY IBRD, WILL PROVIDE DRAINAGE FOR APPROXIMATELY ONE-FIFTH OF TOTAL CULTIVABLE LAND AREAS BY 1981 AND PREVENT FURTHER LOSS DUE TO SALINITY. IF PROJECTS ARE FULLY IMPLEMENTED ON SCHEDULE, GOE MIN AG FORESEES NO INCREASE IN LANDS LOST TO SALINITY AND WATERLOGGING. FURTHERMORE, EXISTING LOSSES SHOULD BE RESTORED TO PRODUCTION.

4. EVEN GREATER THREAT TO CULTIVABLE LANDS IS RAPID URBANIZATION IN CAIRO AND ALEXANDRIA WHICH ANNUALLY CLAIMS HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE ACRES IN RIVER VALLEY OR DELTA. FERTILITY MAINTENANCE ON EXISTING LAND AS BECOME INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT WITH ABSENCE OF ANNUAL RESILTING DUE TO CONSTRUCTION OF ASWAN HIGH DAM. GOE MIN AG, HOWEVER, HAS PROGRAM UNDERWAY TO INCREASE USE OF CHEMICAL FERTILIZERS AND ROTATE CERTAIN CROPS TO REPLENISH SOILS.

5. LAND DEVELOPMENT: ASWAN HIGH DAM HAS CONTRIBUTED TO RECLAMATION OF APPROXIMATELY ONE MILLION FEDDANS (ONE FEDDAN EQUALS SLIGHTLY MORE THAN ONE ACRE) SINCE ITS CONSTRUCTION. COST OF RECLAMATION HAS NOT BEEN MATCHED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BY SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY. VIRTUALLY ALL RECLAMATION COSTS HAVE BEEN BORNE BY GOE. PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES OF EGYPT MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO PROJECT PRODUCTION INCREASES FROM EXPANSION OF ARABLE LANDS BECAUSE COSTS OF DESERT RECLAMATION (AVERAGING ABOUT \$2,000 PER ACRE) ARE FAR IN EXCESS OF PROJECTED POTENTIAL RETURNS DURING SHORT OR MEDIUM TERM. MOREOVER, RECLAIMED LANDS REACH OPTIMUM PRODUCTION LEVELS 7-10 YEARS AFTER THEY ARE BROUGHT INTO PRODUCTION; ONLY THEN CAN INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY BE EVALUATED. MAJORITY OF RECLAIMED EGYPTIAN LAND HAS NOT YET ATTAINED OPTIMUM PRODUCTION LEVELS. THIS FACTOR UNDERSTANDABLY CONTRIBUTES SIGNIFICANTLY TO HIGH COST OF RECLAMATION.

6. IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES: PRINCIPAL TECHNOLOGICAL APPLICATION HAS BEEN INTRODUCTION OF NEW VARIETIES OF EXISTING CROPS--E.G., RICE, COTTON AND WHEAT. IN THIS AREA MEASURED GAINS HAVE BEEN IMPRESSIVE, BUT WIDESPREAD APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES HAS BEEN SLOW. MIN AG HAS MADE POINT IN RECENT SUBMISSION FOR 1978-82 FIVE YEAR PLAN THAT AG SECTOR'S PRINCIPAL PROBLEM IS FAILURE TO IMPLEMENT WIDESPREAD

TECHNICAL CHANGES RAPIDLY. CONSEQUENTLY, MANY POTENTIAL GAINS IN PRODUCTIVITY ARE LOST.

7. PORTION OF 1978-82 PLAN ON AGRICULTURE IS PRESENTLY BEING TRANSLATED UNDER AID CONTRACT. WE BELIEVE THIS MAY HAVE SOME RELEVANT FIVE YEAR DATA THAT DEPARTMENT MAY FIND USEFUL AND PERTINENT TO STUDY WHEN AVAILABLE. POST WILL TRANSMIT COPY OF ENGLISH TRANSLATION AS SOON AS IT IS FINISHED. IN ADDITION TO USAID/USDA STUDY MENTIONED PARA 1, RECENT (NOVEMBER 1977) DRAFT IBRD REPORT ON ECONOMY CONTAINS SUPPLEMENTAL DETAILS ON POINTS RAISED REFTEL IN AGRICULTURE SECTION VOL. 3 EILTS

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